

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of authenticating an audio-visual signal comprising:

dividing a whole image that contains at least one region of flat content into a plurality of regions;

5                   generating a signature including generating signature bits from a first physical region each of [[a]] the plurality of physical regions of the audio-visual signal including the at least one region of flat content;

10                   embedding of said signature by spreading the signature bits of said signature across the whole image such that the signature bits from all regions can be extracted even if the at least one region of flat content has been replaced by tampering whereby the image is protected from tampering in the at least one region of flat content ~~a physical portion of said audio-visual signal without subdividing the signature, said physical portion being larger than said first physical region.~~

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 whereby wherein said signature is embedded as a watermark.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 3 whereby wherein the watermark is a spread spectrum watermark.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 3 whereby wherein the watermark is embedded according to the best trade-off between payload size of said ~~audio-visual signal image~~, robustness of said watermark and visibility of said watermark.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 whereby wherein each signature bit is embedded multiple times in different locations within said physical portion the image.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 ~~whereby~~  
wherein spreading said signature bits comprises decomposing said signature bits to  
multiple areas or a single large area within said ~~physical portion image~~ such that  
information needs to be extracted from said multiple areas or said single large area  
5 within said ~~physical portion image~~, in order to evaluate the original signature bits.

8-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for ~~authenticating an audio-~~  
~~visual signal embedding authentication signatures in images~~ comprising:

a means for dividing images which have flat content areas into a  
plurality of blocks;

5 a means for generating [[a]] signature from a first physical region of a  
plurality of physical regions of the audio-visual signal bits from all of the blocks;

a means for embedding said signature without subdividing the  
signature, whereby said signature is spread across a physical portion of said audio-  
visual signal larger than said first physical region bits across the whole image.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having a  
plurality of computer-executable instructions for authenticating ~~an audio-visual signal~~  
images, the computer-executable instructions comprising:

a first program module which generates instructions for a computer for  
5 dividing the images into regions, at least one of the regions including an area of flat  
content;

a first-second program module generating which generates instructions  
for a computer for generating a signature, said signature being generated from at least  
a first physical region of a plurality of physical regions of said audio-visual signal, by  
10 generating signature bits from each of the regions; and

a second-three program module for generating which generates  
instructions for a computer for embedding said signature in said audio-visual signal  
images, whereby such that said signature is spread across a physical portion of said

15 ~~audio-visual signal without subdividing the signature, said physical portion being~~  
~~larger than said first physical region~~ the image such that the area of flat content is  
protected from tampering.

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 11,  
~~wherein said apparatus is further including~~ one of a surveillance camera, a security  
camera, a digital image camera, a digital video camera, and a medical imaging system  
which generates the images.